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The Gift of
"UNFINISHED BUSINESS"

Commencement Address

The Ohio State University

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It is indeed a high privilege as well as a distinct honor to have been invited to try and express for all of us here today the happiness and satisfactions of this Commencement hour. This occasion is a special pleasure and gratification to me; for it marks the 122nd Quarterly Commencement of this University since I joined its faculty in 1930, - in the last 61 of which I have participated as one of its privileged deans in extending the handclasp of warm personal good wishes--which each of you will receive in a very few minutes--together with this University's highest mark of its prideful approbation and distinction, an earned degree. The hallmark of a degree from this great Institution certifies to the world that the recipient possesses those high qualities of integrity and scholarship rightfully expected of the fully mature, well-rounded, well-educated, citizen of the free world today.

It seems particularly fitting that graduates, their families and friends and the faculty pause, together, on this day of thanksgiving for a bounteous academic harvest for a rededication of this community of scholars to the preservation and advancement of knowledge; with a renewed determination to translate into wisdom and to apply and transmit our version of the truth undiminished and in fresh clarity and abundance to this and succeeding generations. Those of us of an older generation fortunate enough to have been entrusted with the seed selection, cultivation and harvesting of four bumper crops each year on this campus, have weathered the changing seasons of "hot" and "cold" wars, the recurring cycles of economic depression, with the all too brief uncertain peace time interims--always sustained and encouraged by the greater promise of each new harvest of scholars. It is right, then,

that you, and we, should think of and expect this Class to be the best ever to be graduated from the very best University up to this moment. In the decades immediately ahead, you will prove whether or not we are correct in our faith and belief in you today.

Never have the words of Cassius in Shakespeare's tragedy of Julius Caesar had truer significance than in this hour and to you of this class of March 17, 1961:

"Men at some time are masters of their fate; The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves that we are underlings."

Just look about the world today at the "underlings," of whom Communism is taking advantage, and determine once again that this shall not be our fate.

"The justification for a University," according to Harvard's philosopher, Dr. Whitehead, "is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest for life by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning." And, Thomas Henry Huxley, addressing the Founder's Day Convocation at the Johns Hopkins University in 1876, has left us this wisdom of the ages, to wit: "So sure as it is that men live not by bread but by ideas, so sure is it that the future of the world lies in the hands of those who are able to carry the interpretation of nature a step further than their predecessors; so certain is it that the highest function of a University, is to seek out these men, cherish them and give their abilities to serve mankind full play." The inexhaustible curiosity of our talented young men and women is America's richest natural resource today.

Yes, four times a year is not too often in the academic program for the faculty and friends of this highly responsible University to pause, to take stock, to inventory our human assets, to take a hard look again at our objectives, to restate the high ideals, and from time to time, to redefine the ultimate goals to which each of us must be ever recommitted by concern and conviction. This, we do, today, here, cheered and encouraged, and with our faith--not only in man's ultimate survival, but in his eventual triumph and mastery over the still unsolved mysteries of nature--with our faith, I repeat, renewed through the infinite symbolic potential of this first class, of a new year, in a new decade, at the threshold of another new era.

Epochs or eras which used to be measured in centuries, are now accomplished in decades, the rate of change in one year is greater than it used to be in ten, so swiftly has the tempo of life accelerated. While formerly, many succeeding generations of mankind experienced little if any significant changes in their physical or intellectual environment, this century is requiring of man that he adjust during one prolonged but relatively short life time to a succession of breathtaking and awe-inspiring break-throughs from his previous earth-bound ignorance. Even while we are learning to live in atmospheres and under pressures and at temperatures and speeds never previously required of our natural finite physiologic endowments, we are being forced to develop concurrently an entirely new ethics and philosophy to meet the demands of these changed and constantly changing circumstances. Who, among us, is daring enough or wisely imaginative enough to predict the extent and nature of the adjustments you, the graduates of this day, will be called upon to make during the next four to five decades and more, which are now promised to you through the miracles of modern medical science?

Hans Selye, Director of the University of Montreal Institute of Experimental Medicine and Surgery, has recently made some interesting predictions based on the fact that in the experimental laboratory, body tissues from rats have now been kept alive and healthy for periods, the equivalent of a thousand years in the human life scale: I quote: "If and when the causes of aging can be found, there is no good medical reason to believe that it will not be possible for science to find some practical way of slowing this process down or even bringing it to a standstill. In the terms I am using here, aging can be regarded as a disease. Like any other disease, it is probably preventable or curable, and since tissue is technically immortal (as first shown and proved by Nobel prize winner, Dr. Alexis Carrel, with chick fibroblast cultures at the Rockefeller Institute in the 20's and 30's in a laboratory adjacent to my own), the normal life span of a human being may be described as any number of years the medical science of the moment is capable of making it--today's seventy years (an increase from 50 years since 1900), 100, 200, or perhaps more. There is no theoretical limit, though there will always be a practical limit set by imperfect medical skill and knowledge, and the risky but unavoidable adventure of living outside a sterile test tube."

Most of you, then, will live to see the dawn of the 21st Century, if permitted to live out your natural life expectancy, but be warned, as you yourselves join in accelerating the already dangerous tempo of modern progress, that your own adaptations of both mind and body must be made in a brief decade or two, with the same genes conserved by your ancestors through the process of "natural selection" over the past six

hundred thousand years. But, the methods of natural selection will be far too slow to maintain the equilibrium between man and his current radically changing environment, which natural Darwinian evolution has previously been credited with accomplishing. "We, therefore, have only one recourse," according to scientist, Warren Weaver of the Sloan Foundation, New York City, "We must do it with our brains."

Well, what are some of the problems we must solve with whatever educated intelligence we have? Just 3 brief examples:

First and foremost in every one's mind, I assume, is the threat of misapplication of today's nuclear physics. Lord Bertrand Russell speaking in London only last month put it this way: "nuclear armament is the gravest issue ever arisen for mankind. It is a simple matter of life or death of the human species." But, not only must we intelligently harness this new power to avoid sudden explosive annihilation, we must seek promptly to avert the threat to the whole gene pool of the human race from the naturally occurring cosmic rays, the van Allen Band (ionosphere) stretching between us and the planets in outer space, plus the man-made additive radio-active fallout already in the earth's atmosphere, with the imminent threat of much more to come. Yes, we must avert quickly this triple threat--else only physical and mental cripples may inherit this earth.

Secondly: It is perhaps natural that "the great world crisis today" in the opinion of Curram Chagla, Ambassador to the United States from India, "is not one of ideologies, not the menace of Communism," the really explosive underlying challenge, is world-wide "poverty," with its illiteracy and disease. Just this past Tuesday, President Kennedy asked Congress urgently for \$600 million dollars to fight poverty in

Latin America, where in his words, today "millions of people are struggling to free themselves from the bonds of poverty and hunger and ignorance. If we are unwilling to commit our resources and energy to the tasks of social progress and economic development, then we face a grave danger that desperate peoples will turn to Communism or other forms of tyranny as their only hope of change."

The current population explosion has only accentuated this ancient problem. In the 17th Century, the world population was estimated at five hundred million, today it is three billions. Every ten seconds 31 new babies are born into the world for a total of one hundred million in 1959, while in that year, there were just fifty million deaths. The resulting current net yearly increment of about fifty million souls, is as large as today's entire population of Italy; and the world's birth curve continues sharply upward and the annual death rate downward. The resulting per capita income of one and a quarter billion people in one hundred of the less developed countries is less than \$100.00 a year; in India, less than \$60.00, in the United States, \$2,245.00. The Ambassador points out that "cancer or malaria can only kill the body. But when you have unwanted children whom you cannot feed or clothe or educate, you maim the soul--you leave a scar, which destroys the equanimity of mind and twists and distorts the human personality." We must fight "poverty" and its attendant evils in the world within a measurable period of time. The new nations in Asia and Africa are watching to see whether the democracies can solve the multiple problems of poverty, otherwise, their people will inevitably turn to the alluring promises of the totalitarian leaders.

And, lastly, did you know that only 25% of the earth's land surface has been accurately mapped, at least by the free world; and even more surprising, only 43% of the United States is currently accurately mapped? What value intercontinental defense missiles without accurate maps? The obstacles set up by nations have equalled the obstacles set up by nature. The United States Army Map Service has been correspondingly thrilled over the information obtained from the picture taking by the orbiting Tiros observation satellite launched last April; but with the Air Forces' far more sophisticated Samos, launched earlier this year, the technical data radioed back to earth is being translated rapidly into charts of the world, which can determine within an accuracy of one hundred feet the location of any desired point on every bit of land not under the sea. And, with this objective now about to be realized, our Cartographers' attention is now being turned toward "mapping the heavens," a dizzying endeavor where distances daunt the finite imagination, and which will undoubtedly call for some help from some of you before this dream becomes a reality. The time of human interplanetary travel and orbiting space platforms is indeed no further away than "tomorrow," literally, if Khrushchev was accurately quoted earlier this week, his claims strongly supported by the Venus-bound launching of the heavy Russian spaceship last month, as a Valentine to the world, and not scheduled for arrival at its destination until late May, some 160 million miles from earth. The United States Army Map Service and our astronauts-in-training now regard the reaches of the known universe as the "last frontier" - but only, dare we say, until the next frontier appears on the new horizons which will only become visible from Venus?

I recall the preface of John Galsworthy to his novel, The Island Pharisees, where man is described as born into this world to go on a journey, and for the most part, on the well-traveled, broad, main high-road, which his ancestors had made smooth and pleasant with safe shelters and good food for each night. Relatively few travelers even see the narrower side paths leading into the unknown, unmapped forests, much less venture to explore the uncharted rivers, trackless swamps, quick-sands and to risk the hostile animals and men they may encounter. Many of those who are lured from the beaten track temporarily, hurry back, happy to return to the safer and pleasanter way, vowing never to leave it again. But once in a great while a man of vision and courage does get through, and then a wholly new road is opened to all mankind. Only by venturing courageously into the unknown does man discover he, himself, is really free to explore. If men do matter, and surely they do, they matter most when free to matter.

Yes, it will take great spiritual, moral and physical courage, with resourcefulness and just plain gastronomical stamina, to meet the real tests of life, which you of this class will be facing the rest of your lives after you leave this hall this morning. It is a truism that the person without courage to face the trouble he sees ahead, will fare badly against the trouble he doesn't see. The antithesis of "courage" is "fear." Franklin Roosevelt in the depth of the great depression of the 30's told us the "only thing the American people have to fear is fear." And, General Marshall, once told me in a reminiscing mood, that during World War II, when, as Chief of the General Staff, he was responsible for the major decisions affecting the lives of thousands of our troops in a single commitment, he dared not worry about the results of yesterday's

mandatory decisions, nor anticipate tomorrow's crises, because he would then be afraid to make the urgent decisions of "today." Harrison Brown and James Real have currently authored a report to the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, labeled the international "Community of Fear," which they see affecting the behavior of all peoples at this time in the world.

Plato, you will recall, distinguished between two types of fear--the common fear of pain, hardship, death, and the noble fear of dishonor or shame. The virtuous man overcomes the first type of fear and is dominated by the second. Indeed, Plato stated that the basis of courage is the fear of worse evils than pain or death--the fear of dishonor, injustice, enslavement.

Aristotle pointed out, furthermore, that there is a right and wrong degree of fear and reaction to dangerous situations or threats. The coward fears them too much, the courageous man respects them, rationally, the rash man does not know enough to fear them at all. Courage then, is a middle ground between cowardly despair and rash over-confidence.

I believe that President Kennedy in his State of the Union message last January 30th meant to reflect and to invoke this kind of courage, when he said: "I speak today in an hour of national peril and national opportunity. Before my term is ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation organized and governed such as ours can endure. The outcome is by no means certain. The answers are by no means clear. All of us, together, must forge those answers. Together, let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths." A sobering and deep thought-provoking challenge--yes--but he then went

on to outline in some detail those measures he felt could and would bring the right answers to assure a favorable outcome for this country and the free world, and not the least important of the President's stated goals, was embodied in a later special message: "As long as people are stricken by disease which we have the ability to prevent, as long as people are chained by disability which can be reversed, as long as needless death takes its toll, then American health will be unfinished business." To paraphrase this, a sick nation is a weak one, but with the optimum mental and physical health of our people now attainable in the foreseeable future, we may better have the "courage" to solve more quickly and effectively our political and social and economic problems. Only the courageous of heart dare "speculate with thought."

But, courage is not enough. "Without imagination," i.e., a questing spirit, the vision to see beyond our present horizons, a real foresight motivated by the highest aspirations for a better tomorrow, without the "dreamers" of a better world and universe, "courage" is without objective. We are often and, perhaps always will be, disappointed in the almost inevitable time gap between our dreams and their realization, but the insatiable curiosity behind the dreams, and the hope they instill, will never diminish, and without them, where could the architects of our society even begin to start.

Aldous Huxley, a grandson of Thomas Huxley, quoted earlier, an apostle of great scientific versatility in a recent symposium at Dartmouth College on great issues, opined that "We have yet to find out what are the best environmental conditions for eliciting the enormous potentialities of human beings. I think it is quite clear that most of us are

functioning in the terms of engineering at about 15% of capacity, and it would be very nice if we could function, even, say at 20% of capacity. I think there is very good reason to suppose that if we set to work, not merely to develop the conscious part of the mind, but actually to educate the mind-body which has to do the learning and living, to educate the perceptions, to educate the whole muscular system, to educate the imagination--then I really do think that even given the present not extremely high level of genetic accomplishment, we could get a great deal more out of ourselves than we are now getting."

Have you, members of this Class, had your imagination educated in these years of association on this campus with our inspired and inspiring faculty leaders in the humanities and the natural sciences?

With "courage" and with "imagination" must of course be combined "intellectual integrity" and honesty-of-purpose above and beyond temptation or reproach, in other words, both personal and corporate morality. Sir Charles Snow, British physicist, believes that "there's much evil in all of us and much stupidity. But, there is a certain amount which is not evil in nearly all of us, and in most of us, there is a certain amount which is not pure stupidity. And, out of the mixture of will-to-do-good and intelligence, men have done most wonderful things in our time. Life is richer and healthier than it has ever been in human history, not only in this great country of ours, but in the much less favored countries whose people, nevertheless, are inevitable beneficiaries of human progress or human deterioration wherever it occurs in the world."

But, "progress" itself creates new and different problems for each generation. Progress has little meaning today unless it is applied in

a total sense. To escape becoming an exhibit in history's museum as a society that was mentally and morally unprepared for the mature use of our new knowledge, we must demonstrate with strict intellectual integrity, that too rare grace of "tolerance" which can come only with social maturity and emotional stability. Loren Eiseley in taking a sober look at the science of today, makes this indictment: "The western scientific community, great though it is, has not concerned itself enough with the creation of better human beings nor with self-discipline. It has concentrated instead upon things, and assumed that the good life would follow."

Opposing "tolerance" are the frustration and cynicism which lead to "rage." Sandor Rado, Professor and Dean of the New York School of Psychiatry, warns: "Today, one fit of rage may terminate civilization. Rage is the enemy of civilized man. The cave man lived by the strength of his rage, his automatic resort to violence. Since contemporary society depends for its survival on peaceful though competitive cooperation, society must through its institutions (The United Nations for example) tame rage, check the impulsive resort to violence and expand fellow feeling by educating the individual with enlightened self-interest to embrace the general welfare of the whole human race."

Brock Shisholm, Director General of the World Health Organization from 1948 to 1953, has prophesized recently: "We are going to have to help our own consciences to grow up to a degree of maturity that will allow us to function as members of the human race. If enough people and enough places can grow up--mature--to be able to function adequately

as members of the human race, then we can begin to be reasonable about population explosion, about genetics, about food supply, about nationalism, about all sorts of things with which we are not coping effectively now. And, this is a personal problem for each individual. How to go about this change is a problem for the educators of our modern cultures and their enlightened disciples. That means you and me.

Members of the Society of Friends and the late Dr. Tom Dooley, called this type of action "person-to-person influence." Quakers and those of similar philosophy believe that a single act of love may have greater impact than a billion dollar governmental slum clearance program. It is the theory of the "small ripple washing the distant shore," or "a compassionate candle in the darkness." There is something inexorable about ripples; there is something gently relentless about the Quakers and the Tom Dooleys of this modern world. Expressed in another way in another age: "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum strong enough, and, single-handed, I can move the world," so boasted Archimedes in 250 B.C.

Finally, truly mature wisdom so much to be desired, should be the natural consequence when courage, imagination, intellectual integrity, honest motivation and tolerant cooperation are found in all of their broad significance and implication in an educated individual endowed with a sound mind in a physically strong healthy body. In the constitution of the World Health Organization, we find a currently authoritative definition for the word "health": "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This is a new concept in that no one was ever expected to be socially healthy in the past.

The University, therefore, is today's indispensable agency for joining teaching and research, in the natural and social sciences, the twin pillars upon which modern society must stand or fall. Surely any man or woman who aspires to minister greatly to any human need, must be more than a highly skilled professional. The width and breadth and depth of knowledge has become so vast, that its continued splitting into separate and learnable parts has become inevitable. Nevertheless, wisdom is far more than the sum of the separate parts of such knowledge. Therefore, "liberal learning" must continue to provide that transcending keystone to the otherwise incomplete and insecure arch of knowledge, which if and when it is acquired, will give all callings the possibility of true greatness and every individual the opportunity at least to acquire the perspective necessary to true wisdom and to true world citizenship.

In closing, I wish to turn from any suggestion of pessimism in what may have sounded at times as dire warnings, to the incomparably optimistic promises of this new decade--to turn from the "hour of national peril" to contemplate the "hour of national opportunity," to invoke the wonders of science and not its terrors. In every generation from the dawn of history, man has had to fight for his existence, and in a seemingly ever hostile environment, and each succeeding age has thought the challenge to its survival to be greater and more threatening than those in any preceding period. And, so has each epoch been, and ours is no exception. But man's knowledge and wisdom have thus far increased through the evolutionary process to give him ever increasing intelligent mastery over his fate and destiny, and, therefore, why should we have any less confidence in this generation.

Commencement time is by custom and tradition a time for the giving of gifts, in token of the successful passing of one of the most significant milestones in your student life. And, so on this occasion I should like to leave to each of you in this graduating class a gift--a gift on behalf of my generation to yours. My wish for you is that you will accept and treasure in the spirit in which it is meant, the gift of the world's ever new but ever "unfinished business"--that ancient "pearl of great price," to be treasured, and made even more lustrous and hauntingly desirable, and thus, worthy to be passed on to your children and to your children's children, illumined by your further polishing and doubtless resetting. "Unfinished business" a strange gift on first thought, perhaps--implying slovenly habits or lazy procrastination per chance--not so! Just stop for a moment and think of the drab and uninteresting landscape of a tomorrow with nothing left over from today of interest and significance for you--to be imagined, to be intelligently and courageously planned for, and to be dreamed about in your sleep tonight--certain of realization, in part at least, tomorrow, and in every tomorrow, so long as the gift of life itself beckons to you with its fascinating "unfinished tasks." It was a kind Providence or Cosmic Spirit, indeed, which conceived a world of ever-expanding and constantly demanding intelligent ingenuity to make survival really worth the effort.

When you, of this potentially "best class" of all times, have met the challenges of the 60's and 70's in the true greatness of which we believe you to be capable, then and only then, will your University have attained its goal of being the finest University in this our land of greatest promise and unlimited opportunity.

All that I have tried to say to you this morning and everything which this University has tried to instill in your minds and hearts during the months and years of our living together on this favored and beautiful campus with its constellation of resources, may be put into one sentence, and I would give it to you in the language of Milton S. Eisenhower, President of the Johns Hopkins University, speaking to his faculty and students: "Tomorrow is our present tense, we are involved in mankind--the temporary, transient, trustees of the human destiny."

May whatever Gods there be, bless and sustain you, every one, now, and always!